Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the
application:

Listing of Claims:

1-20 (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine for a plurality of players to play a game
against each other, comprising:

    a display for displaying a state of a game;

    a response image data store for storing individual response image data for each
of at least one virtual player, the stored response image data for each virtual player
representing different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual
player;

    a game history data store for storing game history data representing results of
play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player; and

    a game controller for (i) determining if a number of real players is insufficient to
play the game, (ii), if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play
the game, selecting the stored response image data for a virtual player representing
one of the different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player
and corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played, for presentation as an
image to a real player of the game being played with the gaming machine, and (iii)
controlling the play of the game by the virtual player according to an individual
personality of that virtual player which is determined based on at least the stored game
history data.

22. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine according to claim 21, further
comprising:

    a response audio data store for storing response audio data for each of the

different expressions associated with the different reactions of the at least one virtual player, the stored response audio data for each expression representing a different voice communication associated with that expression;

wherein if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play the game, said game controller also selects the stored response audio data representing the one of the different voice communications that is associated with the one expression represented by the selected response image data, for audible communication to the real player in association with the presentation of the image.

23. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim ~~22~~21, further comprising:

~~a game history data store for storing game history data for each of the at least one~~ ~~virtual player, the stored game history data for each virtual player representing the~~ ~~game playing history of that virtual player; and~~

a data change controller for changing the correspondence between an expression for a virtual player and a circumstance of the game being played with the gaming machine based on the stored game ~~playing~~ history data.

24. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 21, wherein said display is an individual display associated with only ~~the~~ a real player playing the game with said gaming machine.

25. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 21, further comprising:

a communications link for transmitting a message from ~~the~~ a real player to another real player included in the plurality of players.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling the play of a game by a plurality of players against each other, comprising:

determining if a number of real players is insufficient to play the game;

if the number ~~of real players~~ is determined to be insufficient ~~to play the game~~, selecting, from response image data that respectively represents different expressions associated with different reactions of each of at least one virtual player, the response image data for a virtual player representing one of the different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player and corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played, for presentation as an image to a real player of the game being played with the gaming machine;

<u>determining an individual personality of the virtual player based on at least game history data representing results of play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player;</u>

controlling the play of ~~the game by~~ the virtual player against other of the plurality of players <u>according to the determined individual personality of that virtual player</u>; and

displaying a state of the game.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, further comprising:

if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play the game, selecting, from response audio data representing a different voice communication for each of the different expressions associated with the different reactions of the at least one virtual player, the response audio data representing the one of the different voice communications that is associated with the one expression represented by the selected response image data, for audible communication to the real player in association with the presentation of the image .

28. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 27, further comprising:

changing the correspondence between an expression for a virtual player and a circumstance of the game being played with the gaming machine based on <u>the</u> game history data ~~for each of the at least one virtual player that represents the game playing history of that virtual player.~~

29. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein said the state of the game is displayed individually to each real player playing the game.

30. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 26, further comprising:

transmitting a message from ~~the~~ one real player to another real player included in the plurality of players.

31. (Currently Amended) A server for controlling play a game by a plurality of players against each other on multiple gaming machines, each gaming machine including a display for displaying a state of the game and a game controller for controlling the state of the game in accordance with input of a real player, the server comprising:

a response image data store for storing individual response image data for each of at least one virtual player, the stored response image data for each virtual player representing different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player;

a game history data store for storing results of play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player; and

a server controller for (i) determining if a number of real players is insufficient to play the game, (ii)~~,~~ if the number ~~of real players~~ is determined to be insufficient ~~to play the game~~, selecting the stored response image data for a virtual player representing one of the different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player and corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played, and (iii) controlling the play of the game by the virtual player according to an individual personality of that virtual player which is determined based on at least the stored game history data;

wherein the game controller of a first of the multiple gaming machines, which is associated with a real player of the game, directs an image of the virtual player with the expression represented by the selected response image data to be presented on the display of the first game machine.

32. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 31, wherein each of the multiple gaming machines further includes an audio output device, the server further comprising:

a response audio data store for storing response audio data for each of the different expressions associated with the different reactions of the at least one virtual player, the stored response audio data for each expression representing a different voice communication associated with that expression;

wherein if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play the game, said server controller also selects the stored response audio data representing one of the different voice communications that is associated with the expression represented by the selected response image data;

wherein the game controller of the first gaming machine directs an audible sound, corresponding to the voice communication represented by the selected response audio data, to be output from the audio output device of the first game machine in association with the presentation of the image of the virtual player on the display of the first game machine.

33. (Currently Amended) The server according to claim 32, further comprising:

~~a game history data store for storing game history data for each of the at least one virtual player, the stored game history data for each virtual player representing the game playing history of that virtual player; and~~

a data change controller for changing the correspondence between an expression for a virtual player and a circumstance of the game being played with the gaming machine based on the stored game ~~playing~~ history data.

34. (Previously Presented) The server according to claim 31, wherein each of the multiple gaming machines includes a communications link for communicating a message from one real player to another real player included in the plurality of players, and the server further comprises:

a communication controller for controlling communication of messages between the multiple gaming machines.

35. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine for a plurality of players to play a game

against each other, comprising:

an image data store for storing image data representing an image of each of at least one virtual player;

a game history data store for storing results of play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player;

a game controller for (i) determining if a number of real players is insufficient to play the game, (ii) if the number ~~of real players~~ is determined to be insufficient ~~to play the game~~, directing the presentation of the image of one of the at least one virtual player represented by the stored image data in association with an expression corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played with the gaming machine, and (iii) controlling progress of the game in accordance with information input by a player, and the play of the game by the one virtual player according to an individual personality of that virtual player corresponding to at least the stored game history data; and

a display screen for presenting the image of the one virtual player with the expression in accordance with the game controller directive.

36. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine according to claim 35, further comprising:

an audio data store for storing audio data representing audible sounds for a plurality of different expressions for each of the at least one virtual player, wherein if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play the game, the game controller directs the audible sound represented by the stored audio data for the one virtual player for the expression to be presented, to also be presented in association with the directed presentation of the image of the one virtual player; and

an audio output device for presenting the audible sound in accordance with the game controller directive.

37. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine as set forth in Claim 35, further comprising:

~~a game playing history store for storing game playing history data for each of the~~

~~at least one virtual player, the stored game history data for each virtual player~~
~~representing the game playing history of that virtual player; and~~

a data change controller for changing the correspondence between an expression and a circumstance of the game being played with the gaming machine for a virtual player based on the stored game ~~playing~~ history data.

38. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 35, wherein said display screen is an individual display screen associated with only ~~the~~ one real player playing the game with said gaming machine.

39. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine according to claim 35, further comprising:

a communications link for transmitting a message from ~~the~~ one real player to another real player included in the plurality of players.

40. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling the play of a game by a plurality of players against each other, comprising:

determining if a number of real players is insufficient to play the game;

displaying a virtual player, only if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play the game;

controlling play of the game by the displayed virtual player against the other of the plurality of players according to an individual personality of that virtual player which is determined based on at least game history data representing results of play of the game by that virtual player; and

displaying a state of the play of the game by the plurality of players.

41. (New) A gaming machine for a game in which a plurality of players participate, comprising:

a basic-personality data store for storing basic-personality data for each of at least one virtual player;

a game history data store for storing game history data representing results of

play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player;

a fortune data store for storing fortune data for each of the at least one virtual player, the fortune data changing according to the day in accordance with a biorhythm of fortune telling; and

a game controller for (i) determining if a number of real players is insufficient to play the game, (ii) if the number is determined to be insufficient, selecting the stored basic-personality data for a virtual player, (iii) setting the personality of the virtual player based on the selected basic-personality data by referencing of the stored game history data and stored fortune data, (iv) controlling the play of the virtual player according to the set personality, and (v) changing the game history data in response to a result of the game being played.

42. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 41, further comprising:

a display for displaying image data;

a speaker for outputting audio data;

a response image data store for storing individual response image data for each of the at least one virtual player, the stored response image data for each virtual player representing different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player; and

a response audio data store for storing response audio data for each of the different expressions associated with different reactions of the at least one virtual player, the stored response audio data for each expression representing a different voice communication associated with that expression;

wherein if the number is determined to be insufficient, the game controller also selects the stored response image data for the virtual player representing one of the different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player and corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played, for presentation as an image to a real player of the game being played with the gaming machine, and

wherein if the number is determined to be insufficient, the game controller also selects the stored response audio data for the virtual player representing one of the

different voice communications that is associated with the one expression represented by the selected response image data, for audible communication to the real player in association with the presentation of the image.

43. (New) A gaming machine for a game in which a plurality of players participate, comprising:

a basic-personality data store for storing basic-personality data for each of at least one virtual player;

a game history data store for storing results of play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player; and

a game controller for (i) determining if a number of real player is insufficient to play the game, (ii) if the number is determined to be insufficient, selecting the stored basic-personality data for a virtual player, (iii) setting the personality of the virtual player based on at least the selected basic-personality, (iv) controlling the play of the virtual player according to the set personality, and (v) changing the game history data in response to a result of the game being played.

44. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 43, further comprising:

a display for displaying image data;

a speaker for outputting audio data;

a response image data store for storing individual response image data for each of the at least one virtual player, the stored response image data for each virtual player representing different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player; and

a response audio data store for storing response audio data for each of the different expressions associated with different reactions of the at least one virtual player, the stored response audio data for each expression representing a different voice communication associated with that expression;

wherein if the number is determined to be insufficient, the game controller also selects the stored response image data for the virtual player representing one of the

different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player and corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played, for presentation as an image to a real player of the game being played with the gaming machine, and

wherein if the number is determined to be insufficient, the game controller also selects the stored response audio data for the virtual player representing one of the different voice communications that is associated with the one expression represented by the selected response image data, for audible communication to the real player in association with the presentation of the image.

45. (New) A gaming machine for a plurality of players to play a game against each other, comprising:

a display for displaying a state of a game;

response image data store for storing individual response image data for each of at least one virtual player, the stored response image data for each virtual player representing different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player;

a basic-personality data store for storing basic-personality data for each of the at least one virtual player;

a game history data store for storing game history data representing results of play of the game by each of the at least one virtual player;

a fortune data store for storing fortune data for each of the at least one virtual player, the fortune data changing according to the day in accordance with the biorhythm of fortune telling; and

a game controller for (i) determining if a number of real players is insufficient to play the game, (ii) if the number of real players is determined to be insufficient to play the game, selecting the stored response image data for a virtual player representing one of the different expressions associated with different reactions of that virtual player and corresponding to a circumstance of the game being played, for presentation as an image to a real player of the game being played with the gaming machine, and (iii) controlling the play of the game by the virtual player according to an individual

personality which is determined based on the stored basic-personality data for that virtual player and with reference to the stored game history data and the stored fortune data.

46. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 21, further comprising:

a basic-personality data store for storing basic-personality data for each of the at least one virtual player; and

a fortune data store for storing fortune data for each of the at least one virtual player, the fortune data changing from time to time in accordance with a biorhythm of fortune telling; and

wherein the game controller controls the play of the virtual player according to the individual personality of that virtual player by (i) selecting the stored basic-personality data for that virtual player, and (ii) setting the individual personality of that virtual player based on the selected basic-personality data by referencing of the stored game history data and the stored fortune data.

47. (New) The method according to claim 26, wherein:

determining the individual personality of the virtual player includes (i) selecting basic-personality data for that virtual player from basic-personality data for each of the at least one virtual player, and (ii) setting the individual personality of that virtual player based on the selected basic-personality data and with reference to the game history data and to fortune data for each of the at least one virtual player, the fortune data changing from time to time in accordance with a biorhythm of fortune telling.

48. (New) The server according to claim 31, further comprising:

a basic-personality data store for storing basic-personality data for each of the at least one virtual player; and

a fortune data store for storing fortune data for each of the at least one virtual player, the fortune data changing from time to time in accordance with a biorhythm of fortune telling; and

wherein the server controller controls the play by the virtual player according to the individual personality of that virtual player by (i) selecting the stored basic-personality data for that virtual player, and (ii) setting the individual personality of that virtual player based on the selected basic-personality data and with reference to the stored game history data and the stored fortune data.

49. (New) The gaming machine according to claim 35, further comprising:

a basic-personality data store for storing basic-personality data for each of the at least one virtual player; and

a fortune data store for storing fortune data for each of the at least one virtual player, the fortune data changing from time to time in accordance with a biorhythm of fortune telling; and

wherein the game controller controls the play by the one virtual player according to the individual personality of that virtual player by (i) selecting the stored basic-personality data for that virtual player, and (ii) setting the individual personality of that virtual player based on the selected basic-personality data and by referencing the stored game history data and the stored fortune data.

50. (New) The method according to claim 40, wherein:

controlling play of the game by the displayed virtual player includes determining the individual personality of the displayed virtual player by (i) selecting basic-personality data for that virtual player, and (ii) setting the individual personality of that virtual player based on the selected basic-personality data and with reference to the game history data and to fortune data for that virtual player, the fortune data changing from time to time in accordance with a biorhythm of fortune telling.